

The Holy Land an Interesting Field of Missionary Enterprise.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

OLD SOUTH CHURCH BOSTON, SABBATH EVENING, Oct. 31, 1819,

JUST BEFORE

THE DEPARTURE

OF THE

PALESTINE MISSION.

BY PLINY FISK, A. M.

Missionary to Palestine.

BOSTON:

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SERMON.

ACTS XX, 22.

And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there.

You are aware, my hearers, that the determination was some time since formed to attempt a mission to Jerusalem and the surrounding country. You are also aware, that he who now addresses you, expects soon to embark, with a colleague, on the proposed mission. You will not, therefore, deem it unsuitable, that on this occasion, I should endeavor to explain the design, and the nature, of the contemplated undertaking.

The mission is destined to an interesting land.

This land is inhabited by several interesting classes of men.

Important advantages to the Church might be expected from the revival of pure Christianity there.

Many difficulties lie in the way.

Many indications of providence are favorable.

The proposal is now distinctly made to the American churches for their approbation, their patronage, and their prayers.

I. The mission is destined to an interesting land. It is destined to Judea, having at the same time particular reference to Asia Minor on the north west, where were the seven churches addressed in the Revelation, and also to Armenia on the north. In ancient days, it was ‘a land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands.’ With a temperate and salubrious climate, with a soil naturally luxuriant, producing in the greatest abundance the means of support for man and beast, this country is capable of supporting, under a favorable government, and with favorable customs and laws, a very numerous population. This was the spot selected from all the surface of the earth by the Creator, to be the residence of that people, whom he loved above all other people. Here the Lord their God gave them ‘a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of vallies and hills; a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of oil olive and honey; a land, wherein they might eat bread without scarceness and not lack any thing; a land, in which they might build goodly houses and dwell therein, and in which their herds and flocks and gold and silver might be multiplied, that they might bless the Lord God for the good land which he had given them.’ It would seem, that the country was originally a favored portion of the earth; or else that a peculiar blessing was granted, that it might be a suitable dwelling for the people of God.

This land is rendered almost sacred in the eyes of every Christian, by a thousand religious associations. Near this place, probably, was the first residence of man,—Paradise with all its innocence and all its bliss.

Here, certainly, was the scene of almost all that is interesting in sacred story. On one of these mountains, Abraham manifested his faith: here Jacob wrestled with God; and here the Israelites found liberty and rest after all their cruel bondage and perilous journeyings. Here David breathed forth those pious sentiments, which have so much assisted, purified, and exalted, the devotions of millions; and here Solomon prepared for the world those wise sayings, which have so enlightened and guided millions in seasons of darkness and doubt. It was here, that Isaiah triumphed in such enrapturing visions of future holiness and peace for the people of God; that Jeremiah poured forth his pious lamentations, on account of prevailing wickedness and the prospect of national ruin; that Nehemiah, and his faithful associates, manifested such undaunted courage, religious hardihood, and persevering industry, in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem;—that all the prophets taught, and labored, and bore reproach. It was in the wilderness of Judea, that John came to announce the Savior's approach and prepare his way before him. In one of these villages Jesus was born; on one of these plains the shepherds were watching their flocks, when a choir of angels came from heaven and sung in their hearing, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.* In the waters of one of these streams our Redeemer was baptised; and it was in these villages that he went about teaching and preaching, healing the sick and raising the dead. On this ground was the garden which witnessed his agony, the stupidity of his faithful followers, and the treachery of the apostate; and on one of these hills stood his cross, the wonder of the

universe, the only hope of a ruined world. This ground has been enriched with the blood of innumerable martyrs, and is the repository of unnumbered bodies, which are to be revived in the form of the Savior's glorious body. This is the spot, from which burst forth that heavenly light, that is to illumine every corner of the earth, and guide to glory all the elect of the Messiah.

But though all these associations may awaken, curious inquiry, and inspire the imagination, yet the heart of piety will be more deeply affected by considering the character and condition of the people, who dwell in this land.

II. Judea is inhabited by several interesting classes of men. The principal of these are Mahomedans, and Jews; and Roman Catholic, Greek, Armenian and Syrian Christians.

The Mahomedans, who are masters of the country, who possess most of its wealth, and who have the exclusive management of political concerns, are, as you well know, the followers of that artful impostor, who arose in Arabia, about the commencement of the seventh century. Their religion was first propagated, and is still defended, by the sword. Cruelty and blood are among its most prominent characteristics. Mahomedan piety consists very much in fasts, ablutions, pilgrimages to Mecca, and the persecution of infidels and heretics. Mahomedans believe, that Moses and Jesus were true prophets; that Jesus was the greatest of prophets except Mahomed; that the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospels were revelations from God, but have been so much corrupted by Jews and Christians, as to deserve but

little credit. They assert the unity of God, the immortality of the soul, and future rewards and punishments. They have, indeed, much of truth in their system: but their customs, established by the usage of centuries, the despotic nature of their government, the prominent articles of their faith, and the very genius and spirit of their religion, shield the Mahomedans almost impenetrably from the influence of Christianity. To make spiritual conquests from them will require the most vigorous efforts of the Christian church. Let the Gospel prevail among them, and some of the strongest fortresses of error and sin will be taken.

There are now a considerable number of Jews at Jerusalem, and in the vicinity. Notwithstanding all that this people have suffered; notwithstanding all their dispersions; they still continue a distinct people, and retain their ancient language, customs and religion:—not their religion as it was exhibited in the piety of David, Daniel, and Nehemiah, but as it appeared in the unbelief and self-righteousness of those Jews, who rejected and crucified the Lord Jesus. Judea, their ancient residence, has always been a rallying point, the centre of information and influence, for the Jews.

The Roman Catholics are scattered in small numbers throughout Judea. At Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and various other places, they have churches, convents, and priests; and enjoy the exercise of their religion. But though they bear the Christian name, and believe the leading facts stated in the Bible; though they hold the doctrine of our Savior's divinity and atonement, and many of the fundamental doctrines of

Christianity, yet they are extremely ignorant of the true spirit of the Gospel; are almost entirely destitute of the Scriptures; and to what they retain of real Christianity they add many inventions of their own. In their view, the Pope is supreme and infallible, and has power to forgive sin and to grant license beforehand for its commission. In their view, men are able to perform, not only such good works as are necessary to their own acceptance and salvation, but by works of supererogation, to lay up in store merit, which may be sold for the benefit of others. Their religious worship consists principally of pompous, insignificant, unscriptural ceremonies.

The Syrian Christians are nominally under the Pope's jurisdiction; though they are said to pay very little deference to his authority, and are much more inclined than the Catholics, to the true doctrines of Christianity, and to the diffusion of them.

The Greeks, in the number and insignificance of their ceremonies, very much resemble the Catholics; but in their doctrines they have not by any means departed so far from the simplicity of Gospel truth. They do not admit the Papal infallibility, indulgences, dispensations, or purgatory.

The Armenians derive their name from the country in which they dwell, and differ very little from the Greeks.

All these sects, though they call themselves Christians, are still destitute almost entirely of the Scriptures, and deplorably ignorant of real Christianity. They embrace probably more than half the population of the whole country. Are not churches, that are more highly favored, under some obligations to

provide pastors and Bibles for these their benighted brethren?

All the inhabitants of the country believe in one God, and the leading facts recorded in the Old Testament. Here are no gods of brass or wood; no temples to Juggernaut, or the Grand Lama; no funeral piles; no altars stained with the blood of human victims. Every where you see a faint glimmering of light, through the gross and almost impenetrable darkness.

Nor are the inhabitants of this region sunk in such entire stupidity and such brutal ignorance, as are the Hindoos of India, and the Hottentots of Africa. Here is intellect, enterprise, and some degree of literature and science. Here several classes of men are among the most interesting that dwell on the earth, and are worthy the prayers and the attentions of all those, who desire to see influence, learning, talent, and strength of character consecrated to Christ.

III. Important advantages to the church might be expected from the revival of pure Christianity in this land.

Its commercial relations are such as would make it a radiating point, emitting its light in every direction. The navigation which is carried on in the Mediterranean would afford opportunity to send abroad Bibles, particularly through all the north of Africa. An extensive commerce is carried on by caravans, between this land and Turkey, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, and even India and China. Let the merchants of these caravans once become intelligent and zealous Christians, and they would diffuse Christian knowledge in every direction. One of them, Mr. Kako, some

years since became acquainted with the Scriptures and engaged zealously in their circulation, as he travelled from Judea to China.

By their religion too, as well as by their commerce, these people are connected with almost all the globe. Let the Mahomedans of Judea embrace Christianity, and they would with great ease diffuse it through the surrounding Mahomedan countries. Let the Jews of Judea embrace the Messiah, and they would with ease and efficacy make known to their brethren every where, that they had found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets did write. Let the Catholics of Judea learn the simplicity of the Gospel, and instead of rehearsing useless and unfounded traditions to pilgrims, who visit the church of the holy sepulchre, they will tell them the affecting story of the Savior's death; explain its design and efficacy; and send them away not laden with relics, and filled with superstitions; but melted to penitence, and excited to gratitude and obedience. Let the Greek and Armenian Christians add to what they now have of the true religion, such doctrines and feelings, as we may hope they will receive from reading the Bible and hearing the Gospel; and, from their characteristic enterprise, it may be expected, that they will furnish some of the best of missionaries, and engage in effective measures for reviving knowledge and piety in all Western Asia.

Again, these people sustain extensive connexions by means of the languages which prevail among them such as the Arabic, the sacred language of Mahomedans, and the common language of millions,—the Greek and Armenian, spoken by many millions of

nominal Christians, who are widely scattered; the Turkish, the language of twenty millions; and the Hebrew, which may give access to Jews in all their dispersions.

Who can estimate the effects, that may at some future day result from the revival of truth and religion among these people?

It may also be hoped, that the prosecution of missionary labors, in the Holy Land, will, in some measure at least, assist in elucidating the meaning of Scripture; for though God has addressed men in language so plain and intelligible, that none need to mistake in things material; yet the figures, the parables, the prophetic language of Scripture have beauty, and richness and strength, which are seen only by an acquaintance with the customs and scenery of that land, "where the book of books was handed down from heaven." Though no important advantage of this sort should be realized immediately, yet the time will probably come, when this anticipation shall be answered, in an eminent degree.

IV. Many difficulties lie in the way.

The plan has not been devised, nor is the work to be undertaken, without counting the cost. The government of the country is arbitrary. The property, the liberty, and the lives of all classes of subjects, are at the disposal of the sovereign and his vice-gerents. The country is infested by robbers, and plundering banditti. The religions of the country are all strongly characterised by violent prejudice, and bigotry of the darkest hue. The principles of political liberty, and the rights of conscience are not understood. The languages of the country are numerous, and these must

all be acquired in order to introduce the Gospel among all classes. Nor do they, among whom this mission is to be undertaken, contemplate the character of Protestant nations with that respect, which is felt for civilized men among more untutored tribes. The savages of the wilderness, and in the islands of the Pacific, have, by intercourse with the civilized world, received the impression, that Christian nations are, in many things at least, their superiors, and qualified to teach them. Not so, probably, in Western Asia. Contempt, perhaps, rather than respect, and a haughty sense of superiority are to be anticipated.

V. Many indications of providence are favorable.

Firmly as Mahomedans are shielded against Christianity, there are some favorable appearances, even among them. The Persian monarch has expressed his approbation, in high terms, of the New Testament, as translated by Mr. Martyn; and has caused punishment to be inflicted on those who spoke reproachfully of Christ and his religion. Under royal authority, it has been determined by a large council in Persia, that the religion of Christ shall be tolerated, and shall not be reproached. There are in Persia about 80,000 persons, who, ten or twelve years ago, openly renounced Mahomedanism. They are said to speak highly of Christ, and to revere the Scriptures.—Many things indicate the speedy conversion of Jews to Christianity. In order to effect this, societies have been formed, the New Testament translated into Hebrew and circulated, Christian schools established for Jewish children, agents sent abroad to collect information concerning them, and in Europe, especially in Poland, a general spirit of inquiry is excited among them. This has

been effected, in a great measure, by the travels of Mr. Pinkerton and Mr. Way, and the converted Rabbi Solomon. Within a few years, several Jews around the Mediterranean have embraced Christianity. A Jew at Smyrna received a copy of the New Testament last year, and was zealously engaged in studying it. His object was, that he might prove it false; but the fact that a Jew will receive and study the Gospel is encouraging.

A general spirit of reform and improvement is evidently prevailing in the Greek church, with which the Greeks in Judea are connected. Knowledge, literary and religious, is increasing, and the glory, which so long ago departed, is, we trust, about to return.

Great exertions are making to circulate the Scriptures in that land. There is already a Bible Society at Malta, and another at Smyrna, which have effected considerable, and are likely to effect much more. The British and Foreign Bible Society, have sent many Bibles into that region, in the different languages, which prevail there. Several years ago, an English chaplain from Constantinople visited Smyrna, Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Laodicea, and Philadelphia, and left a copy of the Scriptures at each place. Eight or ten years ago, Dr. Naudi, a converted Roman Catholic at Malta, sent a box of Bibles to the Archbishop Paleologus on Mount Lebanon, who distributed them among the priests in his diocese, and wrote a very grateful letter of thanks for them, stating, that the priests were reading them in their congregations with much interest. Last year the Rev. Mr. Burckhardt left Malta with several large boxes of Bibles, travelled through Judea, visited

Jerusalem, distributed the Scriptures, and often conversed freely respecting them. He had nearly completed his tour, when he was attacked with a fever, and died near Aleppo in Syria. Two large editions of the Armenian Bible are printing in Russia and in India. The Protestant Bible Society at Paris, with the assistance and patronage of the British and Foreign Bible Society, have lately printed a large edition of the Turkish Testament, under the superintendence of the learned Baron De Sacy and Professor Keiffer, interpreting Secretary to the king; and some thousands of this edition have already been forwarded for circulation. The whole Bible is soon to be printed, at the same place, and sent to Turkey. How interesting, my brethren, to see France and Britain, which have been for many centuries almost incessantly at war, now at peace; and cordially co-operating in Bible Societies to spread the word of Life; and how interesting to see France, which has done so much to spread infidelity, now awaking her energies to distribute the Bible.

Sometime last year, the Syrian Archbishop of Jerusalem, left his dwelling on Mount Lebanon, to obtain from some source the means for printing and diffusing the Scriptures. He first visited Rome, in hope of obtaining aid from the college for propagating the faith. Here he was disappointed. He next applied to the Catholics at Paris. Here he was disappointed again. He then visited England. Here he found the aid he sought. Several hundred pounds were collected for him, and an American gentleman who was there, presented him with a printing press. After leaving England he visited Paris again. During his

absence, an interest had been excited in his behalf, and he received 400*l.* from private subscription, and nearly as much from the king. In May, he was about leaving Paris for his own country, to prosecute his work. Such are some of the favorable indications of Providence, which lead us to believe, that although no mission has yet been established there, yet the work may be commenced with fair prospects of success.

VI. The proposal is now distinctly made to the American churches for their approbation, their patronage and their prayers. The proposal is made by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Though they have now many stations, many missionaries, and many schools under their care, yet the liberality of the public, and the smiles of Providence, encourage them to extend their views, to select new fields, and to employ more men.

The proposal is, that two embark in the first instance, reside a little while at Smyrna, and then explore the country as Providence may open the way, with the hope that others will before long come to strengthen their hands. The ground, if Providence permit, is to be surveyed, and then the distribution of the Bible, the preaching of the Gospel, and the establishment of Christian schools are to succeed. This undertaking is submitted to the churches for their approbation. Let the timid say, "A lion is in the way." Let the infidel demand, "Where is the promise of his coming?" Let avarice muster all its objections. But the friends of Jesus have learned how to measure their benevolence by contemplating his cross, and how to regulate their anticipations of the future, by

recollecting what God has formerly wrought. We rejoice that we are not called to this work, while our fathers and brethren disapprove of our purpose. It gives us heart-felt satisfaction to lay the object before the friends of the Redeemer and say, "While you continue here to cultivate the vineyard of the Lord, we will go to plant, if possible, a branch of his vine in the land where it first grew. While we rejoice in your labors, and sympathize in your trials, we are happy to believe, that you will approve our determination and rejoice and weep with us."

The subject is also proposed for patronage;—for such pecuniary aid, as may furnish means for circulating the Scriptures—establishing schools—and increasing the number of missionaries.

Again, the object is presented for their prayers. Who is sufficient for this undertaking? While we recollect our youth, our inexperience, our remaining sins and imperfections, and our inadequateness to meet the temptations and the labors before us, we desire that Christians will pray for us, in the closet, when they find ready access to the throne of their Father; in the family, when all the fervor of social affection is consecrated to devotion; in the praying circle, when kindred minds mingle in holy communion and earnest intercession; in the general concert, when a cloud of incense ascends to heaven; and in the great congregation, when the prayers of the Sabbath are offered. And the thing for which we especially request their prayers is, that we may be filled with a *faithful spirit*.

Nor is this object presented to the churches in vain. Already have ministers and Christians given most substantial proofs of their approbation; proofs which have

exceedingly cheered and encouraged our hearts. Among these tokens of approbation we shall long remember, with tenderest sensibility, the solemn and affecting day, when, as our spirits were sinking in view of our arduous labors, he,* who has lately ascended from this pulpit to his rest, extended to us the hand of Christian and ministerial fellowship, and encouraged our hearts by affectionate assurances of approbation, and assistance. And, if we judge of future patronage by what has been already experienced, we may hope to see, before even a few years shall elapse, many Bibles distributed, many schools established and many missionaries employed, in this interesting field, by means of American effort and American charity. Many, we do not doubt, have been already engaged in earnest supplication for the blessing of God on this undertaking. These tokens of approbation, these charities, and these prayers, have done much to lessen the sacrifice we are called to make, to smoothe the rugged path before us, and to animate us in our work.

But though we are cheered with animating hopes, yet we go, not knowing the things that shall befall us. Whether we shall be buried in a watery tomb; whether disease shall bring us to an early grave; whether the suspicion of government or the bigotry of false religion, shall shut the door against us; or whether a great and effectual door shall be opened before us, and the word of the Lord have free course and be glorified, as it is with you; whether we shall spend a long life in labors, and die having only sown the seed from which others may reap the harvest; or whether we shall see the truths prevail and die sur-

* The Rev. Mr. HUNTINGTON.

rounded by converts from error, who may soothe the bed of death and weep over our tomb; these are points to be decided not by human sagacity, but by Him, whose Providence calls us, whom we would cheerfully obey, and in whom we would trust the future. The time has arrived, when we are called by the Providence of God, if its language is not altogether misunderstood, to leave the scenes of our childhood, and the country that is blessed, beyond any other country under heaven, with civil and religious privileges; not to find other privileges and friends like them in another land; but to meet the uncertainties and difficulties, attendant on a Christian mission among Turks and Jews. If any circumstances can affect the mind in health, as it is affected by a near prospect of death, it is perhaps thus affected with the prospect of leaving for life all who have ever been known, and all that has ever been seen. This prospect brings eternity near. It excites solicitude respecting that meeting, which shall be an eternal meeting, or a prelude to eternal separation. In this parting moment suffer the word of exhortation. Christian brethren, live in prayer. Bear the cross. Keep your hearts in heaven. Be faithful to souls under your care, and to all around you. Be eminently spiritual, devout and holy. Grow in grace, in usefulness, and in Christian enjoyments. In this way may you hope for a happy death. My youthful friends, be exhorted to attend carefully to your spiritual interests. Let not the glowing hopes of juvenile ardor so possess your breasts, as to leave no place for a Savior's love. Time and all it can boast is but a dream. In eternity are the realities, that demand your

affections and your care. To those realities direct your hopes and efforts.

Do any hear me, who have lived to advanced age without a saving acquaintance with the Gospel? Respected friends, permit me by the solemn anticipations of this moment to beseech you, while the last sands are running, and even the eleventh hour spends rapidly, to seize the moment and secure salvation.

The Lord bless and keep you all; the Lord be gracious to you and cause his face to shine upon you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. AMEN.

INSTRUCTIONS

From the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, to the Rev. LEVI PARSONS and the Rev. PLINY FISK, Missionaries designated for Palestine.

*Delivered in the Old South Church Boston, Sabbath Evening,
Oct. 31, 1819.*



BELOVED BRETHREN,

AGREEABLY we trust, to the good pleasure, and to the recorded directions of HIM who reigns upon the Holy Hill Zion, you have been solemnly consecrated to his service in the Gospel, by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery; and have received the Right Hand of Fellowship, that you should go to the Mingled People, now sitting in darkness, in that once favoured Land, where the LIGHT of the world first shone, and thence blessed the Nations with healing radiance. The great principles and rules essential to every Christian Mission, have been inculcated and impressed upon your minds in the Charges, delivered to you respectively when you were ordained, and in the Instructions more recently delivered in your hearing to other Missionaries, your beloved Brethren, sent forth to the Isles afar off. These you will have in your hands, and, we trust

also, in your hearts—and will ever sacredly regard as constituting the leading and main part of the Instructions for your Mission.

What we have now to deliver are Directions of a more particular kind.

In pursuance of arrangements made for the purpose, you will embark on board the ship Sally Anne, Capt. Robert B. Edes, master, now ready to leave this port for Smyrna. We are happy in the persuasion that you will find your accommodations for the passage good, and your situation not unpleasant; and in the confidence that you will commend to all who are with you the Missionary Character, by an example which cannot but be seen and felt, of its purity and devotedness,—its meekness and benignity; and that it will be your joint endeavour to make the best use of your opportunities and means for your own improvement, and for the benefit of others.

If according to expectation the ship touch at Malta, the few days of your stay there will be of great importance. The Rev. Mr. Jowett, the Rev. Mr. Conner, and Dr. Naudi, whose names, and whose zeal for enlightening the shores of the Mediterranean in their whole ample circuit, are known and honoured in all the Christian World, will have it in their power, and, not less we are persuaded in their hearts, to render you very essential aid. To them you will have letters; with them it will be your care to cultivate acquaintance, and to establish a friendly understanding and correspondence; and from them you will obtain, we doubt not, much important information, many useful notices, and such letters as will contribute to procure for you a favourable reception in Asia.

At Smyrna the Rev. Charles Williamson, the British Chaplain, has displayed an active and excellent spirit in plans and exertions for promoting designs of Christian benevolence. The British, Russian and Dutch Consuls there are liberal subscribers to the Smyrna Bible Society, and the Greek Bishop of Smyrna himself has shown a disposition favourable to the

Society and its objects. To them it is to be hoped, you will be so commended, and will so commend yourselves, as to secure their Christian confidence, kind attention and friendly aid. And in that great Mart, and place of resort from different nations, where greater freedom is enjoyed than in almost any other place within the Ottoman Dominions, you may find not a few, and some of our own Countrymen, with whom it will be pleasant and useful to cultivate acquaintance.

There also, you will be in a situation affording many advantages for furnishing yourselves in various respects for your great work.

For the effective prosecution of the work, a knowledge of several languages will be of material importance: as particularly the Hebrew and Ancient Greek, with which, though already not slightly acquainted, you will wish to become more intimately familiar; the Modern Greek which, though not of the first necessity in Judea, yet will be worth your attention,—especially as it will not be of difficult acquisition; the Arabic both ancient and modern, which you will have occasion to use every day, and with which your acquaintance must be thorough; the French and Italian of which, though you have now some knowledge, it will be desirable to acquire more; and the Turkish, which will be constantly in your hearing, and to which you will give more or less attention as circumstances shall direct. All these languages, excepting perhaps the Ancient Greek are *spoken* at Smyrna; and during your residence in that place, the acquisition of them, or of some of them, and most especially of the Arabic, will be a business to which, with the best helps you can obtain, you will give diligent attention.

You will be warranted in continuing at Smyrna as long as, from the best advices, it shall appear that you are losing no time in regard to the proper and principal objects of your Mission. And thence you will proceed to Palestine, either by water or by land as shall be deemed most eligible; due regard being had to the probable advantages for becoming acquainted with places, people, customs and manners, in travelling by

land,—to safety,—and to economy in respect to time and expense.

You will understand it to be the pleasure of the Committee that the Mission should be established at Jerusalem; if it can be without hazards not to be incurred, or embarrassments not to be undergone. We are sensible that it will be a difficult station; we are not certain that the occupation of it will be found practicable, or, if practicable, on the whole eligible: but we devoutly hope that it will be; and are persuaded that if you can reside there with safety, the importance of the station will outweigh many difficulties. You will be thorough in your inquiries, will proceed with caution, and will decide with deliberate and well advised discretion.

If the decision shall be, that the time is not come for a Mission to be established at Jerusalem, you will direct your attention to Bethlehem, a place less infested with jealousies and of greater salubrity; to other places of distinguished importance, within, or without, the limits of Judea; and determine in regard to your fixed residence as Providence shall indicate.

Your Mission is to be regarded as a part of an extended and continually extending system of benevolent action, for the recovery of the world to God, to virtue and to happiness. In the prosecution of it, respect is to be had, not merely to what may be effected by your own efforts directly; but also, to the lights and facilities, the aids and inducements, which you may afford to the efforts of others, either acting contemporaneously with you, or successively to come after you. Facts are lights; clear inductions are lights; fair results of experiments are lights; correct notices of evils and of remedies are lights. To lay open to the view of Christians the state of the world or of any portion of it, and to point out ways and means of melioration,—is to do much towards the accomplishment of what is possible.

Yours is a field of no ordinary description. It comprises, either within itself or by intimate association, all that is most affecting to Christian Feeling, or most interesting to Chris-

tian Hope. There Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Apostles, and Martyrs,—and He who is their Lord and ours,—lived, and laboured, and died. There the revelations of Heavenly Mercy were given,—the Sacrifice for the world's Redemption was offered—and the Commandment of the Everlasting God, that the Gospel should be made known unto all Nations for the obedience of faith, was delivered;—and there the first Churches of the Exalted Redeemer,—which once shone with his glory in all its brightness resting upon them,—now lie in ruins. The Candlesticks have, long since, been removed,—the light has been for dismal centuries almost totally extinguished; and the powers of darkness have triumphed and trodden down and led captive, at their pleasure. *But the Lord will arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. For His servants take pleasure in her stones and favour the dust thereof.* Her old waste places are to be builded; and the foundations of many generations to be raised up.

That the hearts of all Christians may be engaged in this mighty work, that the exertions for its accomplishment may be wisely directed, and the proper means in the best manner applied,—the scene must be laid open in as clear a light as possible, and every thing comprised in it must be examined with care. The doing of what you can for this purpose will constitute no small share of the business, the interest, and the utility of your Mission. For a lucid illustration of what we here mean we refer you to the Christian Researches of Dr. Buchanan, who desired to see the things which you are sent forth to see, and into whose design, with a like activity of benevolence and diligence of inquiry, it may be your privilege to enter.

In this part of your work, besides applying yourselves to the study of languages, you will be engaged during your stay at Smyrna. There indeed you will be on Classick Ground, and whatever of contribution or of service you can afford to Literature or to Taste, with fidelity to your higher objects, will be interesting to many, and useful to the general

cause. But however inspiring the scenes where Poets sung, and Sages mused, and Artists displayed their enchanting skill; still more sacred, exalted, and affecting will be the inspiration from those where Paul preached,—and John saw his Visions,—and the Seven Churches of Asia received the admonitions of **HIM who hath the key of David, and openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.**

The seats of those Churches you will visit, for the purpose of examining, with Christian Heart and Eye, the things that remain; and seeing what can be done for strengthening them. Other places in those regions will fall within your range; and possibly Haivali and Scio, distinguished seats of modern Grecian Learning. And on your journey, if you travel by land from the Lesser Asia to Palestine, many places and scenes and objects of deep interest will offer themselves to your notice and examination.

From the heights of the Holy Land—from Calvary, from Olivet, and from Zion—you will take an extended view of the wide spread desolations, and variegated scenes, presenting themselves on every side to every Christian sensibility; and will survey with earnest attention the various Tribes and classes of fellow beings who dwell in that land and in the surrounding countries.

At Jerusalem and in Judea you will find people of many nations, Jews, Arabs, Turks,—Asiatics and Europeans of different and distant countries; and of various Religions, Judaism, Paganism, Mahomedanism, and Christianity.

The professed Christians are not only of different nations, but of various Communions and Names: Romanists, Grecianists, Armenians, Nestorians, Jacobites, and Protestants.

With this mingled people, in all its varieties, you will endeavour, by attentive observation and diligent inquiries, to make yourselves as thoroughly acquainted as possible; in regard to their general state, their religious opinions and rites, their moral and civil habits and manners, their means of improvement; in a word the circumstances favourable and unfavourable to the propagation of the Gospel, in its purity and with its blessings, among them.

In your inquiries especial regard will be had to the Bible: Whether copies of it exist and are read,—of what kind, and to what extent? Whether the circulation of it might be increased?—In what versions, by what means, and in what amplitude? It will be an object also to ascertain what other books are in use, or are held in esteem; and what useful books or tracts might be circulated, and in what languages.

The two Grand Inquiries ever present to your minds will be—WHAT GOOD CAN BE DONE? and, BY WHAT MEANS? What can be done for the Jews? What for the Pagans? What for the Mahomedans? What for the Christians? What for the people in Palestine? What for those in Egypt—in Syria—in Persia—in Armenia,—in other countries to which your inquiries may be extended?

You may be assisted in these inquiries by such correspondences, commenced with caution and managed with wisdom, as you may find it convenient to establish and maintain.

It will be pleasant and useful, if by the way of Suez, to which place the Bombay Bible Society extends its benevolent care, you shall be able to open and prosecute a correspondence with your brethren at Bombay and Ceylon.

The fruits of your researches, consisting of facts, descriptions, notices, reflections, comparative views, and suggestions of methods and means of usefulness,—you will regularly enter in your Journals, and transmit to us as opportunities are afforded. Possibly also you may be able to send home some Books or ancient Manuscripts, interesting to the student in the Scriptures, in Ecclesiastical History, or in general literature; or at least gratifying to a laudable veneration for Antiquity or to a reasonable curiosity.

In all your communications to us and to others, it will be of high importance that your statements and representations be correct and exact. For this purpose too much care cannot be employed.

This business however, of procuring and communicating information, interesting and important as it will be, is not all that you are to attempt. You go to that Land—still of PROMISE—as Christian Missionaries—as Ministers of Christ commissioned to testify the Gospel of the grace of God to Jews and Gentiles; to people of every nation and name and condition. This character you are sacredly to maintain in every place; and this commission you are faithfully to execute as you have opportunity.

It is right, however, that you should bear in mind the word of the Lord Jesus, to those whom he first commissioned and sent forth two and two, to preach in the same Land;—*Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: BE YE THEREFORE WISE AS SERPENTS, AND HARMLESS AS DOVES.—BEWARE OF MEN.* This caution certainly was not more important for them, than it is for you.

The abettors of those different Religions, and the adherents to the different sects, regard each other with mutual jealousy; and you will not think it strange if they all regard you with something more than suspicion. You will take all prudent care that you do nothing rashly—nothing inconsiderately or unadvisedly; that you do not inadvertently or needlessly expose yourselves to resentments, rapacities, stratagems, or acts of violence,—startle prejudices, excite suspicions, or offend against laws, or customs, or ceremonies, or opinions: and that, by avoiding all appearance of earthly wealth or distinction, by Christian courtesy and kindness, and meekness and gentleness,—and by all fair and lawful means, you conciliate civility, confidence, favour, and respect.

Though you are to maintain the Character and fulfil the Commission of Ministers of Christ; yet you will exercise a wise discretion in regard to the publicity which you give to yourselves, or to the errand on which you are sent. It may be necessary to your ultimate success that, for some time, you withhold yourselves from public notice, and prosecute your studies, inquiries, and general object in retirement; making acquaintance, meanwhile, with individuals as favourable oppor-

tunities are offered, and extending your circle as circumstances direct or admit.

It will be of especial importance to seek among those, who are Christians in *name*, for such as are Christians in *heart*, with whom you may be joined in one spirit. With such, of whatever denomination, it will be as delightful as it will be useful to cultivate acquaintance, friendship, and the most sacred fellowship. Some such may be found with whom you may take sweet counsel, and go to the Mercy Seat of God in company; hold stated exercises of devotion and instruction, and concert measures for doing good. Though the Association be small at first, it may increase and be advanced to great utility.

Be this your motto—**UNION OF ALL WHO LOVE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN SINCERITY.** Make it a steady aim to reduce the distinction of names, and forms, and minor differences of opinion, to their proper places; that they may not separate Brethren, nor obstruct communion, nor hinder unity of design or of action. Let the Prayer of the common Saviour and Lord, offered on that consecrated spot for his Disciples then present, and all that should believe on him through their word, be remembered with the deepest feeling: *That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* Should this divine sentiment, this spirit of celestial union, only be duly felt by you and a few others in Judea who truly believe in Christ; how soon might scenes, scarcely less refreshing than those of Pentecost, be expected. 'That it may be so felt,—and that the diffusive and vivifying influence may be realized, let nothing, Dear Brethren, be wanting on your part.

At the house occupied by yourselves, if at no other place, you may find it safe and convenient to have stated seasons for social worship; at which you may open and allege the Scriptures, and hold such other exercises as shall be deemed most proper. Some true worshippers, some serious inquirers, and others willing to hear, may attend; and the word of God may grow, and prevail.

You may also at your house be able to receive pupils for instruction either in a regular course, or in some particular branches. A few promising youth will be worth your attention, on their own account and on account of the services which they may eventually render to the cause; and in this part of your work, you will proceed with engagedness, as the way shall be opened to you.

It will be a primary care, that your station become a Depository for Bibles, and other Books and Tracts, for distribution around you, and extensive dispersion. At all seasons Jerusalem is a place of resort; and from Christmas to Easter especially, the city is filled with pilgrims from countries near and far off. Opportunities therefore will be afforded continually for distributions to an indefinable extent. And if you find yourselves free to establish a Depository, and to make issues from it, and take care to let it be known in what languages Bibles and Testaments may thence be distributed, and what other Books and Tracts are wanted for the same purpose, you will soon receive, and will continue to receive supplies.

You must not despise the day of small things. You must not be impatient under embarrassments and restraints. We know that your hearts are enlarged and ardent; we have great confidence also in the spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind which God has graciously given you. It will be put, we have no doubt, to a severe test; it can be adequately sustained, only by that same Almighty Grace by which it has been given. You must dwell in God; and be strong in him and in the power of his might. Though straitened in the circumstances of your situation, in Him you need not be straitened. When he pleases he can bring you out into a large place. From small beginnings he can advance your work in its several parts, to extensive operations and mighty results. It may be esteemed by the world a fool-hardy enterprise; but the world knows not what it is to trust in the promised aid of EVERLASTING STRENGTH.

If, however, it shall seem good to the Sovereign Lord of Missions, that you should labour, as many of his servants have,

both abroad and at home, without seeing the desired effects; still, if faithful, your work will be with him, and you will be glorious in his sight. If you are permitted to plant the grain of mustard seed, though it come not to be a great tree before you rest from your labours; it may ultimately, nevertheless, be for life to many nations, and for an everlasting praise.

Your Mission,—associated as it will be, in every Christian mind, with all that is interesting in the ages that are passed and in the ages to come, will have a strong hold upon the Christian Community, and every circumstance of it will be extensively and deeply felt. Does this oppress your minds with an appalling responsibility?—Let it encourage your hearts with the cheering assurance of being helped with many prayers.

The Jews have been for ages an awful sign to the world. But the period of their tremendous dereliction, and of the severity of God, is drawing to a close. You are to lift up an ensign to them, that they may *return and seek the Lord their God and David their king.* They will return. The word of promise is sure;—and the accomplishment of it will be as life from the dead to the Gentile world. The day is at hand. The signal movements of the age indicate its dawn.—It may be your privilege to prepare the way of the Lord. It may be your felicity to see some of the long lost Children of Abraham, returning with dissolved hearts; and confessing with unutterable emotions, that the same Jesus whom on that awful spot their fathers crucified, is indeed the Messiah, the Hope of their nation and of all the nations of the earth. It may be your distinguished honour to be leadingly instrumental in *building again the Tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and the ruins thereof, and in setting it up; that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom his Name is called.* It will be our unceasing prayer, and the unceasing prayer of many, that your Mission may be crowned with all this joy and all this glory.

You will tread upon the ground on which Prophets and Apostles trod;—on which Jesus Christ went about doing good, enduring the contradictions of sinners, and weeping over their obstinacy and wretchedness, until he sealed his message of mercy with his blood. Be it your care to tread in his steps. Keep your eyes steadily fixed, *looking unto HIM*; that amidst your toils, and difficulties, and discouragements, you be neither weary nor faint in your minds. He is your Leader and Commander. That Land belongs to Him. There again he will establish his throne, and will reign from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the world. And his word is sure,—*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne: even as I also overcame, and am sit down with my Father on his throne.*

We commend you most affectionately to the grace of God. You will ever be upon our hearts. YES, DEAREST BRETHREN, WE WILL STRIVE TOGETHER, AND THE CHURCHES IN THIS PLACE AND THROUGHOUT OUR LAND, WILL STRIVE TOGETHER IN PRAYER TO GOD FOR YOU; THAT YOU MAY BE DELIVERED FROM THEM THAT DO NOT BELIEVE IN JUDEA; AND THAT YOUR SERVICE FOR JERUSALEM MAY BE ACCEPTED OF BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES THERE.

By the Prudential Committee,

S. WORCESTER, *Secretary.*